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Yakima County Department of Human Services



*Esther Magasis,
Director of Human Services*

Director's Note

Welcome to the first Yakima County Department of Human Services Newsletter! I hope that this publication will give you a look into the work we here at the Human Services Department do to serve the residents of Yakima County every day.

The last couple of months have been full of new contracts, new grants, and new ideas about how to continue providing services in the age of COVID-19. In

addition to awarding our 2020-2022 round of Homeless Housing and Assistance Program Grants, this year the Human Services department has: Developed a strong public-private partnership with the Yakima Valley Community Foundation to provide resources through the Yakima Valley Nonprofit Needs website and to start the Yakima Valley Broadband Action Team; worked with the Veterans Coalition and Health District to redesign the annual Stand Down event to serve veterans safely during COVID; partnered with the Yakima County Development Association to distribute financial assistance to small businesses impacted by COVID; began a project to install solar panels on tiny homes at the Yakama Nation Village of Hope shelter to create COVID isolation units; and secured \$2.88 million dollars in rental assistance funds to keep our neighbors in their homes during this difficult time.



If you're reading this newsletter, it's because you are someone who is interested in the well-being of our community. I hope this newsletter answers some questions you had about Human Services Yakima County – and maybe even raises some new ones. If you do have additional questions, please check out our website at yakimacounty.us/2333/Human-Services, or send us an email at HumanServices@co.yakima.wa.us.

In Service,

ESTHER
Esther Magasis

Our Team

Esther Magasis
Director

Lance Larsen
Homeless Program Analyst

Dave Brown
Veterans Program
Coordinator

Mitzi Duenas
Human Services Office
Specialist

Brian Galloway
Veterans Program Office
Specialist

Veterans Program Food Drive

The Yakima Valley Veterans Coalition is hosting their annual Fall Food Drive for the Yakima County Veterans Program Food Pantry. The Veterans Program is seeking non-perishable items that are not out of date, such as: microwave meals, tuna, chicken, ham, peanut butter, jelly, crackers, chili, baked beans, hearty soups, and snack bars. We are also accepting gift cards to purchase food and gas. Veterans have really appreciated the gift cards we have received in the past for McDonald's!

Donations can be dropped off at the Yakima County Veterans Program office located at 223 N 1st St, Yakima, 98901. **Please call ahead to ensure that someone will be in the office: (509) 574-1537 or (509) 574-1528.**

Checks can be made out to Yakima Valley Veterans Coalition and brought to the Yakima County Veterans Program office, or mailed to P.O. Box 1239, Yakima, 98901.



Donations will be collected from September 1st - September 15th.

Thank you for your support!

Yakima County Stand Down

In other Veterans Program news, the Yakima County Stand Down will still be held in October – although with some new limitations to ensure the safety of our guests and volunteers. This year, we are asking that participants register in advance so that we can safely and efficiently observe social distancing requirements. **If you or someone you know is a Veteran interested in attending the Stand Down, please register for this year's event at: <https://forms.gle/r32xKbKPXqWzBAj17>.**



The Stand Down will be from 9am - 8pm on October 15th, 2020 at the SunDome. Masks will be required.

Contact Us

Yakima County Department of Human Services
 HumanServices@co.yakima.wa.us

Homeless Housing and Assistance Program
 128 N 2nd St
 Yakima, WA 98901

Veterans Program
 223 N 1st St
 Yakima, WA 98901

Yakima Valley Broadband Action Team

COVID has made it more clear than ever that **access to reliable and adequate internet is a necessity, not a luxury**. Many people in our valley have NO access to the internet or it may be slow and unreliable. Without internet, families can't access education for their children, connect to doctors, apply for work or financial assistance, or maintain important social connections while isolated. The internet is essential to our community's health, education and quality of life.



Right now, community partners in the **Yakima Valley Broadband Action Team** are working together to collect data about internet speed and availability throughout our region. The data will be used to request funding from federal, state and philanthropic sources to help improve the broadband infrastructure and put essential technology in the hands of communities and families to allow all residents equal access to education, health and other vital resources.



You can help! Visit ConnectOurValley.org to take our simple and safe one-click speed test.

Supporting Small Businesses

The Department of Human Services awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to the Yakima County Development Association (YCPA) for their **Small Business Coronavirus Assistance Fund**. The application for funds is now closed, but information on the program can be found at: chooseyakimavalley.com/covid19/financial-help/small-business-coronavirus-assistance-fund. Thank you to our community partner, YCPA, for providing this crucial service to our local small businesses!

Upcoming Events

Yakima County Homeless Coalition General Membership Meeting

Date

Tuesday, September 15th

Time

1:30-3:30PM

Location

Online (Microsoft Teams)

Email the Department at HumanServices@co.yakima.wa.us to be added to the mailing list and receive call-in information for our online meetings

Stand Down

Date

Saturday, October 17th

Time

8:00AM-4:00PM

Location

Yakima SunDome

1301 S Fair Ave

Yakima, WA 98901

Please register in advance at

<https://forms.gle/r32xKbKPXqWzBAj17>

Rental Assistance

The Department of Human Services, in partnership with the Washington State Department of Commerce, has secured an additional **\$2.88 million dollars of rental assistance** to assist families in need this fall.

Our most recent (pre-COVID) figures show that at least 43% of renters in Yakima County are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened when it comes to housing – meaning that more than 30 or even 50 percent of their income goes towards housing costs. With the governor’s moratorium on evictions still in place, we haven’t yet seen the full impact that COVID could have on our community. Given how many households were already one or two paychecks away from eviction before COVID, it’s clear our community will benefit from supporting the families and individuals struggling to figure out how they will be able to afford rent and arrears once the moratorium is lifted.



We aren’t going to wait until the evictions hit – **we need to act now**. This additional rental assistance will keep families in their homes, prevent mom-and-pop landlords from defaulting on their mortgages, and suppress a sudden rise in homelessness in our community.

Yakima County Human Services is partnering with the following agencies to provide rental assistance paid directly to landlords for residents of Yakima County:

- **Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic Northwest Community Action Center**
- **Yakima Neighborhood Health Services**
- **Latino Community Fund**
- **OIC of Washington**

See our website for more details and contact information for each of our partner agencies: yakimacounty.us/2453/For-Tenants-and-Landlords

Schools Reopening and Online Safety

As our schools reopen in the fall, many students in our County will be attending classes 100% online. While online classes will be keeping families safe from COVID, students spending more time online may present an increased risk of new dangers: **online bullying, identity theft, and even human trafficking.**



Help keep your students safe online this year with resources from NetSmartz (missingkids.org/NetSmartz), NetSmartzKids (netsmartzkids.org), Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia.org), and Internet Safety 101 (internetsafety101.org).

Key strategies for parents include:

- Create a list of “internet rules” with your kids
- Set parental controls and using filtering and monitoring tools as a compliment – not a replacement – for parental supervision
- Supervise all internet-enabled devices and keeping computers in a public area of the home
- Check the history file on the computer your child uses
- Teach children not to interact with people they don’t know
- And most importantly – communicate with your children! **Be a trusted adult** who they can come to with concerns. Be prepared to have conversations about healthy sexuality, when to share information even with friends, and how to tell what kinds of websites are safe to use.

Good luck to all our students and families in this new school year! You might be a Davis Pirate, a Grandview Greyhound, or a member of the Wapato Wolf Pack – wherever you are learning, we are proud of all of our county’s students, and hope you have a great year!

Thanks for your interest in Yakima County Human Services. Feel free to contact us any time at HumanServices@co.yakima.wa.us

Yakima County Department of Human Services

